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eyes, is thus illumined with the approaching light which we have been waiting to behold. And as we stand upon the shore, conscious of the spirit that has moved upon the face of the waters, we may lift our eyes with more confiding faith to the over-watching Heaven."

ART. V. — *Lectures on Subjects connected with Literature and Life*. By EDWIN P. WHIPPLE, Author of "Essays and Reviews." Boston: W. D. Ticknor & Co. 1850. 12mo. pp. 218.

MR. WHIPPLE may now fairly be called the most popular essayist in this country; and he has substantial merits which go far to justify the favor with which his writings have been received. To a large acquaintance with English literature, a prompt and retentive memory, a lively fancy, and considerable wit, he joins the brisk and smart exuberance of style which is the most agreeable quality of the essayist, and the most essential to his success. His command of expression is almost marvellous; he showers words upon the page with a prodigality that astonishes the lean and bare scribblers who, after painful search and with many contorsions, clothe their shivering thoughts in scant and inappropriate garments. He revels in the abundance of his wealth, and changes his rich costume so frequently and swiftly, that the reader begins to think he is playing tricks with dress, or is substituting words for thought. Yet the suspicion would be groundless. The expression, though lavish and ornate, is almost invariably clear, pointed, and precise. Because he has a large store to choose from, the word selected is just the appropriate word, conveying the precise idea that the writer wishes to impart, without distortion or indistinctness. Mr. Whipple's essays, therefore, form easy and luxurious reading. We are not obliged to pause and dwell upon a sentence before we can detect its meaning, or discern its connection with what precedes and what follows in the train of thought.

The essayist does not aim at complete and elaborate inves-

tigations ; he touches upon many subjects, but exhausts none. He has no excuse, therefore, for tiring the reader with wire-drawn disquisitions, complex processes of argumentation, painful collections of facts, or a mere *farrago* of other men's ideas. He is at liberty to skip all that is tedious in the exhibition of his theme, and all that he may suppose to be familiarly known to most of his readers. He is bound not to be dull, feeble, or common-place, but he is not obliged to be methodical, far-reaching, or profound. He is a gleaner on the fields of thought, and is expected to bring into barn only what the regular reapers have left behind them. Still he must bring wheat, and not tares ; he must gather what the husbandmen have overlooked, or what has dropped from their wearied arms, not what they have intentionally left to decay. We look to the quality, not the quantity, of the collection that he has made, and are grateful to him for any addition, however slight, that he may make to the sum of knowledge, the means of entertainment, or the materials of thought. The aggregate of good done by many laborers in this department of effort may be considerable ; English literature would lose much of what is most entertaining and valuable in it, if the productions of all the essayists were left out of the account, or condemned to the flames. There are some minds — Lord Bacon's and Dr. Johnson's, for instance, judging the latter, however, only from his conversations — the mere drippings of which are of more worth than the full flow of other men's thoughts. We prize both the essays of the former and the talk of the latter for the acuteness and originality displayed in them, and never think of censuring them for not looking at all sides of a subject, or not exhausting all that can be said upon it. It is often a greater mark of genius to be able to say something that is new and striking upon a very trite theme, than to spread out a more novel topic in all its breadth and variety.

These considerations, which in themselves are sufficiently obvious, are very necessary to be kept in mind in passing judgment upon such a volume as Mr. Whipple has just published ; as we might otherwise unfairly accuse him of presumption in selecting ambitious but hackneyed topics for his Lectures, or of superficiality in his mode of writing upon them. Here is a little book of about 200 pages, which professes to

treat of "subjects connected with Literature and Life," subjects which are subsequently specified as follows:—Authors in their Relation to Life, Novels and Novelists, Wit and Humor, the Ludicrous Side of Life, Genius, and Intellectual Health and Disease. Volumes might be written upon any one of these themes; but we doubt whether they would be half as entertaining as these slight but spirited essays. Of course, they are "Lectures" only in name, that appellation being given to them because they were written for the purpose of delivery before a literary association in Boston, and also before several of the lyceums in our country towns. The miscellaneous character of the audiences to which they were addressed made it necessary to treat familiar topics, and imposed some restrictions upon the writer in regard both to the selection of his materials and the characteristics of his style. He could not wing a very lofty flight without passing beyond the range of vision of at least a portion of his hearers. But he had also too much good sense to hug the ground from an affected desire of accommodating himself to their perceptions. He does not pay his audience the poor compliment of telling them, by implication at least, that he is making an effort to keep himself down to the level of their apprehensions. Confiding in the general transparency of his style and in the obviousness of the associations in his trains of thought, he writes frankly and naturally, without any painful reference to the tastes or powers of his auditory. Some of the literary criticisms interspersed in these Lectures relate to books which most of his hearers probably had never seen; many of the allusions to facts in literary history could not have stirred their recollections. And yet, the fact that these performances were received with applause by such an audience as can be collected in any of our small villages, bears honorable testimony both to the tact of the speaker and to the general cultivation of the people of New England.

The chief negative merit of these essays is the entire lack of pretence and affectation. The writer is not bitten with a pestilent desire of playing any other part than that for which nature has designed him. He is neither a pedant, a sentimentalist, nor an enthusiast; though he has the taste and feelings of a poet, the gleams of a very rich fancy often irradiating the substance of his prose, he does not fly off into

rhapsodies, or die away in ecstasies. His vigorous common sense and quick perception of the ludicrous guard him effectually from such follies, and he launches some keen shafts of ridicule against those who are guilty of them. He does not belong to the modern school of political philanthropists, and has no universal nostrum to recommend as a cure for all the evils with which society is afflicted. He is not possessed by one idea, but looks round the whole horizon of truth, and welcomes the light which comes to him from any quarter. There is a pervading air of kindness and good nature in his estimate both of books and men ; if a satirist, he is a playful and benevolent one, and his laugh is genial, leaving no trace of party prejudice or personal animosity. This negative praise may not seem a high compliment either to his disposition or his talents ; but the faults of pretension, cant, and savageness infect so much of the popular fugitive literature of the present day, that it seems to us no small merit in an author to be entirely free from them.

Of all the later English essayists, Mr. Whipple may most properly be compared with Hazlitt, whom he closely resembles except in this very point of his imperturbable good humor. Hazlitt was a soured man, who had quarrelled with the world, and was disposed to avenge his supposed wrongs on every person who crossed his path. He was a savage politician, and many of his essays on public affairs show the concentrated energy of hate. But his perception of the beauties of literature was as keen as his perception of personal wrong. His taste was formed by diligent study of the writers of the Elizabethan age, and his estimate of their merits, his explanation of their peculiarities, manifested a degree of critical insight and a power of metaphysical analysis which have seldom been surpassed. Felicities of expression stud his page as frequent as the stars in the evening sky. When he wholly forgets himself and his supposed injuries, he is delightful, though he has none of the sly humor of Lamb, and but little of the affectionateness and simplicity of Leigh Hunt. Mr. Whipple reminds us of him at every turn, especially in his fondness for the use of metaphysical terms in criticism. The ordinary resources of the critical vocabulary are not enough for these two writers ; they carry the analysis so far that they are obliged to give the results in phraseology borrowed from

another science. They are constantly striving to fix evanescent beauties upon the page, to mark vanishing lines of difference, and to describe in words what can only be felt. This detracts somewhat from the naturalness of their style, though it does not injure its transparency; they are both too great masters of English idiom ever to drop the leading thought in a mere fog of words. Hazlitt often wrote narrative, and we wish Whipple would follow his example; for his style now too frequently *creams* like sparkling, but very light ale, which lacks body. Thought always lies beneath, but it is often subtle and over-refined thought, or a playful repetition of one idea, which is meant to tickle the reader's fancy after it has satisfied the demands of his intellect. Rapid, vigorous, and condensed narration is the best exercise-ground for writers whose tendency is to be continually fencing with words. The rigid demands of the story oblige them to take the buttons off from their foils.

But it is time that we should give our readers a taste of Mr. Whipple's quality; though there is less need of making extracts in this case, as he has been a frequent and favored contributor to our pages. On account of the bias that we naturally feel from this circumstance, our readers may make such deduction from the praise already bestowed as they may think proper. The following lively and ingenious parallel between wit and humor is very characteristic, and certainly very good; the lines which we have italicized are as witty as any thing in Dr. Barrow's celebrated description of wit, which is daringly quoted in the very lecture from which this extract is taken.

"Wit was originally a general name for all the intellectual powers, meaning the faculty which kens, perceives, knows, understands; it was gradually narrowed in its signification to express merely the resemblance between ideas; and lastly, to note that resemblance when it occasioned ludicrous surprise. *It marries ideas, lying wide apart, by a sudden jerk of the understanding.* Humor originally meant moisture, a signification it metaphorically retains, for it is the very juice of the mind, oozing from the brain, and enriching and fertilizing wherever it falls. Wit exists by antipathy; Humor by sympathy. Wit laughs *at* things; Humor laughs *with* them. Wit lashes external appearances, or cunningly exaggerates single foibles into character.; Humor glides into the heart of its object, looks lov-

ingly on the infirmities it detects, and represents the whole man. Wit is abrupt, darting, scornful, and tosses its analogies in your face; Humor is slow and shy, insinuating its fun into your heart. Wit is negative, analytical, destructive; Humor is creative. The couplets of Pope are witty, but Sancho Panza is a humorous creation. Wit, when earnest, has the earnestness of passion, seeking to destroy; Humor has the earnestness of affection, and would lift up what is seemingly low into our charity and love. Wit, bright, rapid and blasting as the lightning, flashes, strikes, and vanishes, in an instant; Humor, warm and all-embracing as the sunshine, bathes its objects in a genial and abiding light. Wit implies hatred or contempt of folly and crime, produces its effects by brisk shocks of surprise, uses the whip of scorpions and the branding-iron, stabs, stings, pinches, tortures, goads, teases, corrodes, undermines; Humor implies a sure conception of the beautiful, the majestic, and the true, by whose light it surveys and shapes their opposites. It is an humane influence, softening with mirth the ragged inequalities of existence, promoting tolerant views of life, bridging over the spaces which separate the lofty from the lowly, the great from the humble. Old Dr. Fuller's remark, that a negro is 'the image of God cut in ebony,' is humorous; Horace Smith's inversion of it, that the taskmaster is 'the image of the devil cut in ivory,' is witty. Wit can coëxist with fierce and malignant passions; but Humor demands good feeling and fellow-feeling, feeling not merely for what is above us, but for what is around and beneath us. When Wit and Humor are commingled, the result is a genial sharpness, dealing with its object somewhat as old Izaak Walton dealt with the frog he used for bait, — running the hook neatly through his mouth and out at his gills, and in so doing 'using him as though he loved him!' Sydney Smith and Shakspeare's Touchstone are examples."

This is brilliantly said; but while the writer accumulates the points in regard to which wit differs from humor, we are not sure that he hits with a sure aim, or even keeps constantly in sight, the fundamental distinction between them, upon which all their other differences depend. Humor, as it seems to us, is continuous and consistent wit embodied in character. Hence, wit sparkles, and humor flows. Falstaff is a humorous character who says witty things; Corporal Nym, on the other hand, is a humorous creation, but he has no wit at all. Wit gives a pleasing shock, but humor affords continuous delight. Unexpectedness in the combination of ideas is characteristic of both; but in the case of humor, one

of the related ideas is, so to speak, a fixed quantity, being the character which is to be illustrated. Witticisms have no connection with each other, so that a constant succession of them may tire; they are like a bunch of India crackers all fired off at once, one explosion being just like another in regard to the effect produced. But every stroke of humor has a relation to the character which is its object; all the strokes are in keeping with each other, and all tend to make the portrait more complete and lifelike. Uncle Toby's merciful treatment of the bluebottle fly is a humorous illustration of the same benevolence and simplicity of heart which appear in his conduct towards poor Le Fevre. Humor, consequently, never tires; the effect of successive strokes is cumulative, not disjunctive. The wit of the characters in Sheridan's comedies, for instance, *tells* like frequent blows from a hammer, the effect constantly diminishing as the nail is driven nearer home; but humor acts like gravity on a descending weight, which moves faster and faster every instant. The wit of Shakspeare's characters is all, to a certain extent, humorous; for it is all in keeping with the minds and hearts of those who utter it. Rosalind's wit differs from Touchstone's as plainly as the moralizing of Jacques from that of the Duke. Humor is witty portrait-painting.

Mr. Whipple's description of irony is very much in his manner, fanciful illustrations of the leading thought being clustered together with a sort of comic rapidity and earnestness.

"Irony is an insult conveyed in the form of a compliment; insinuating the most galling satire under the phraseology of panegyric; placing its victim naked on a bed of briars and thistles, thinly covered with rose-leaves; adorning his brow with a crown of gold, which burns into his brain; teasing, and fretting, and riddling him through and through, with incessant discharges of hot shot from a masked battery; laying bare the most sensitive and shrinking nerves of his mind, and then blandly touching them with ice, or smilingly pricking them with needles. Wit, in this form, cannot be withstood, even by the hardest of heart and the emptiest of head. It eats and rusts into its victim."

The extracts already made illustrate our essayist's command of language and the peculiarities of his style; but they are not fair specimens of his power of thought, the sobriety and

correctness of his judgment, or his facile use of the rich stores of English literature for the purposes of illustration and ornament. It is partly his own fault, if these more substantial merits of his writings have been sometimes overlooked, or not clearly perceived, through the glitter and sparkle of his sentences, and his frequent playfulness of manner. The last Lecture in this volume, on Intellectual Health and Disease, does more justice than the others to the higher qualities of his mind ; we shall therefore make liberal quotations from it, though to be fairly appreciated, it must be read as a whole. The leading idea of the essay, or the philosophy of mental disease, is thus stated.

“ An analysis of our consciousness, or rather a contemplation of the mysterious processes of our inward life, reveals no faculties and no impulses which can be disconnected from our personality. The mind is no collection of self-acting powers and passions, but a vital, indissoluble unit and person, capable, it is true, of great variety of manifestation, but still in its nature a unit, not an aggregate. For the purposes of science, or verbal convenience, we may call its various operations by different names, according as it perceives, feels, understands, or imagines ; but the moment science breaks it up into a series of disconnected parts, and considers each part by itself as a separate power, that moment the living principle of mind is lost, and the result is an anarchy of faculties. Fortunately, however, we cannot free ourselves, by any craft of analysis, from personal pronouns. A man who speaks or acts, instinctively mentions it as — *I* said, *I* did. We do not say that Milton's imagination wrote *Paradise Lost*, but that Milton wrote it. There is no mental operation in which the whole mind is not present ; nothing produced but by the joint action of all its faculties, under the direction of its central personality. This central principle of mind is spiritual force, — capacity to cause, to create, to assimilate, to be. This underlies all faculties ; interpenetrates, fuses, directs all faculties. This thinks, this feels, this imagines, this worships ; this is what glows with health, this is what is enfeebled and corrupted by disease. Call it what you please, — will, personality, individuality, character, force of being ; but recognize it as the true spiritual power which constitutes a living soul. This is the only peculiarity which separates the impersonal *existence* of a vegetable from the personal *life* of a man. The material universe is instinct with spiritual existence, but only in man is it individualized into spiritual life.

“ This mind, this free spiritual force, cannot grow, cannot

even exist, by itself. It can only grow by assimilating something external to itself, the very condition of mental life being the exercise of power within on objects without. The form and superficial qualities of objects it perceives ; their life and spirit it conceives. Only what the mind conceives, it assimilates and draws into its own life ; — intellectual conception indicating a penetrating vision into the heart of things, through a fierce, firm exertion of vital creative force. In this distinction between perception and conception, we have a principle which accounts for the limited degree in which so many persons grow in intelligence and character, in grace and gracelessness. Here, also, is the distinction between assent and faith, theory and practice. In the one case, opinions lie on the surface of the mind, mere objects, the truth of which it perceives, but which do not influence its will ; in the other, ideas penetrate into the very substance of the mind, become one with it, and are springs of living thought and action. For instance, you may cram whole folios of morality and divinity into the heads of Dick Turpin and Captain Kidd, and both will cordially assent to their truth ; but the captives of Dick's blunderbuss will still have to give up their purses, and the prisoners of Kidd's piracy will still have to walk the plank. On the other hand, you may pour all varieties of immoral opinions and images into the understanding of a pure and high nature, and there they will remain, unassimilated, uncorrupting ; his mind, like that of Ion,

‘ Though shapes of ill
May hover round its surface, glides in light,
And takes no shadow from them.’

“ In accordance with the same principle, all knowledge, however imposing in its appearance, is but superficial knowledge, if it be merely the mind's furniture, not the mind's nutriment. It must be transmuted into mind, as food is into blood, to become wisdom and power.

“ If the mind thus grows by assimilating external objects, it is plain that the character of the objects it assimilates will determine the form of its development, and its health or disease. Mental health consists in the self-direction of mental power, in the capacity to perceive its own relations to objects and the relations of objects to each other, and to choose those which will conduce to its enlargement and elevation. Disease occurs both when it loses its self-direction, and its self-distrust. When it loses its self-direction, it surrenders itself to every outward impression ; when it loses its self-distrust, it surrenders itself to every inward whim. In the one case, it loses all moral and intellectual character, becomes unstrung, sentimental, dissolute,

with feebleness at the very heart of its being ; in the other, it perversely misconceives and discolors external things, views every object as a mirror of self, and, having no reverence for aught above itself, subsides into a poisonous mass of egotism, conceit, and falsehood. Thus disease occurs both when the mind loses itself in objects, and when objects are lost in it,—when it parts with will, and when it becomes wilful. The last consequence of will submerged is sensuality, brutality, slavishness ; the last consequence of will perverted is Satanic pride. Now, it is an almost universal law, that the diseased weak, the men of unrestrained appetites, shall become the victims and slaves of the diseased strong, the men of unrestrained wills, and that the result of this relation shall be misery, decay, and death, to both. Here is the principle of all slavery, political, intellectual, and religious, in individuals and in communities.”

The danger of losing one's individuality, or the power of self-direction, is thus illustrated :—

“ Look around any community, and you find it dotted over with men, marked and ticketed as not belonging to themselves, but to some other man, from whom they take their literature, their politics, their religion. They are willing captives of a stronger nature ; feed on his life as though it were miraculous manna rained from heaven ; complacently parade his name as an adjective to point out their own ; and give wonderful pertinence to that nursery rhyme, whose esoteric depth irradiates even its exoteric expression :—

‘ Whose dog are you ?
I am Billy Patton's dog,
Whose dog are *you* ? ’

“ This social servility, as seen in its annual harvest of dwindled souls, abject in every thing, from the tie of a neckcloth to the points of a creed, is a sufficiently strong indication of the tyranny which a few forcible persons can establish in any of our ‘ free and enlightened ’ communities ; but perhaps a more subtle influence than that which proceeds from social relations, comes from that abstract and epitome of the whole mind of the whole world, which we find in history and literature. Here the thought and action of the race are brought home to the individual intelligence ; and the danger is, that we make what should be our emancipation an instrument of servitude, fall a victim to one author or one age, and lose the power of learning from many minds, by sinking into the contented vassal of one ; and end, at last, in an intellectual resemblance to that gentleman who only knew two tunes, ‘ one of which,’ he said, ‘ was Old Hundred,

and the other — was n't.' The danger to individuality, in reading, is not that we repeat an author's opinions or expressions, but that we be magnetized by his spirit to the extent of being drawn into his stronger life, and losing our particular being. Now, no man is benefited by being conquered; and the most modest might say to the mightiest, — to Homer, to Dante, to Milton, to Goethe, — 'Keep off, gentlemen, — not so near, if you please; you can do me vast service, provided you do not swallow me up; my personal being is small, but allow me to say of it, as Touchstone said of Audrey, his wife, 'A poor thing, sir, but mine own.' "

The fatal consequences of erring in the opposite extreme, by allowing will to degenerate into wilfulness, are set forth, first, in the case of individuals, and afterwards, of communities.

"In passing from the simple forms of Asiatic life to the complex civilization of Greece, a more difficult problem presents itself. The Greek Mind, with its combination of energy and objectiveness, its open sense to all the influences of nature, its wonderful adaptation to philosophy, and art, and arms, — where, it may be asked, can you detect disease in that? The answer to this question is fortunately partly contained in the statement of a fact. Greek civilization is dead; the Greek mind died out more than two thousand years ago; a race of heroes declined into a race of sycophants, sophists, and slaves; and no galvanic action of modern sympathy has ever yet convulsed it into even a resemblance of its old life. Now, if it died, it must have died of disease; for nothing else has power to kill a nation. In considering the causes of the decay of a national mind so orderly, comprehensive, and creative as the Greek, we must keep steadily prominent the fact that it began in Satanic energy, and that it is an universal law that this energy in the end consumes itself. Perhaps the history of the Greek Mind is best read in the characteristics of its three great dramatists, — sublime and wilful in *Æschylus*, beautiful in *Sophocles*, sentimental in *Euripides*. The Greek deified Man, first as an object of religion, then as an object of art. Now, as it is a consequence of high culture, that a superstition, having its source in human passions, shall subside from a religion into an art, the Greek became atheistical as he grew intelligent. He had, so to speak, a taste for divinities, but no belief in them. He acknowledged nothing higher than his own mind; waxed measurelessly proud and conceited; worshipped, in fact, himself. He had opinions on morals, but he assimilated no moral ideas. Now, the moment he became an atheist,

the moment he ceased to rise above himself, he began to decay. The strength at the heart of a nation, which keeps it alive, must either grow or dwindle; and, after a certain stage in its progress, it can only grow by assimilating moral and religious truth. Moral corruption, which is the result of wilful energy, eats into the very substance and core of intellectual life. Energy, it is true, is requisite to all greatness of soul; but the energy of health, while it has the strength and fearlessness of Prometheus chained to the rock, or Satan, buffeting the billows of fire, is also meek, aspiring, and reverential. Its spirit is that of the stout old martyr, who told the trembling brethren of the faith who clustered around his funeral pyre, that if his soul was serene in its last struggle with death, he would lift up his hands to them as a sign. They watched, with tremulous eagerness, the fierce element, as it swept along and over his withered frame, and, in the awful agonies of that moment when he was encircled with fire, and wholly hidden from their view, two thin hands quivered up above fagot and flame, and closed in the form of prayer.

"In the Greek mind, the wilful element took the form of conceit rather than pride, and it is therefore in the civilization of Rome that we must seek for the best expression of the power and the weakness of Satanic passion. The myth, which declares its founders to have been suckled by a wolf, aptly symbolizes that base of ferocity and iron will on which its colossal dominion was raised. The Roman mind, if we look at it in relation to its all-conquering courage and intelligence, had many sublime qualities; but pride, hard, fierce, remorseless, invulnerable pride and contempt of right, was its ruling characteristic. It existed just as long as it had power to crush opposition. But avarice, licentiousness, effeminacy, the whole brood of the abject vices, are sure at last to fasten on the conqueror, humbling his proud will, and turning his strength into weakness. The heart of that vast empire was ulcerated long before it fell. The sensuality of a Mark Antony is a more frightful thing than the sensuality of a savage; and when self-abandonment thus succeeds to self-worship, and men are literally given over to their lusts, a state of society exists which, in its demoniacal contempt of restraint, sets all description at defiance. The irruption of barbarian energy into that worn-out empire, — the fierce horde of savages that swept in a devouring flame over its plains and cities, — we view with something of the grim satisfaction with which an old Hebrew might have surveyed the engulfing of Pharaoh and his host in the waters of the Red Sea."

These are copious extracts; but we must borrow one passage more, though from a different Lecture, to illustrate

the writer's ready application of the materials both of civil and literary history to the illustration of his subject.

"Satirical compositions, floating about among a people, have more than once produced revolutions. They are sown as dragon's teeth; they spring up armed men. The author of the ballad of Lilliburlero boasted that he had rhymed King James the Second out of his dominions. England, under Charles II., was governed pretty equally by roués and wit-snappers. A joke hazarded by royal lips on a regal object has sometimes plunged kingdoms into war; for dull monarchs generally make their repartees through the cannon's mouth. The biting jests of Frederick the Great on the Empress Elizabeth and Madame de Pompadour were instrumental in bringing down upon his dominions the armies of Russia and France. The downfall of the French monarchy was occasioned primarily by its becoming contemptible through its vices. No government, whether evil or good, can long exist after it has ceased to excite respect and begun to excite hilarity. Ministers of state have been repeatedly laughed out of office. Where Scorn points its scoffing finger, Servility itself may well be ashamed to fawn. In this connection, I trust no one will consider me capable of making a political allusion, or to be wanting in respect for the dead, if I refer in illustration to a late administration of our own government, — I mean that which retired on the fourth of March, 1845. Now, during that administration measures of the utmost importance were commenced or consummated; the country was more generally prosperous than it had been for years; there were no spectacles of gentlemen taking passage for France or Texas, with bags of the public gold in their valises; the executive power was felt in every part of the land; and yet the whole thing was hailed with a shout of laughter, ringing to the remotest villages of the east and the west. Everybody laughed, and the only difference between its nominal supporters and its adversaries was, that whereas one party laughed outright, the other laughed in their sleeves. Nothing could have saved such an administration from downfall, for whatever may have been its intrinsic merits, it was still considered not so much a government as a gigantic joke."